

September 26, 2009

Dear PSC Commission,

The grant I received to attend the class titled "Tracking the Heat" that was offered by the Yellowstone Association undoubtedly enhanced my content knowledge about the formation of the Yellowstone Hotspot. Lisa Morgan who works for the USGS taught the class and she has spent the last 15 years researching the hotspot from Craters of the Moon to its current location in Yellowstone National Park. Each day we hiked to different locations in the park to explore the geology created by the volcanism over the last 4 million years. While at Old Faithful, I learned to recognize the caldera and many other land features so that I can point them out to my students when we visit the park in the spring.

Students in my class will study volcanism in the spring and the geology of our area. Most of them have heard the story of Yellowstone's volcano, whether on TV or in books or at the Canyon visitor Education Center. This class allowed me to experience the story up close and in the field. We hiked to calderas and locations like Yellowstone Lake that were rich with geologic evidence of the volcano. I learned to identify the rocks, their relationships to each other, and to the volcano. In this class I learned how to use Yellowstone to reach my students and teach important standards in science. I also participated in curriculum activities and learned best practices for teaching in any outdoor setting. I think these skills can easily be transported to school and shared with my students. I'm hoping it will inspire them to value spending time outdoors while learning about the geology in their backyard.

Thank you for funding this incredible class so that I can become more of a content expert for my students. I feel that I am better prepared to teach my 3rd and 4th grade students about geology in our area and in Yellowstone National Park.

Sincerely,

Christenia Coast
Pocatello Community Charter School

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